

³⁶¹ district, fifteen miles to the north, far enough from the town, where the ugly galvanised iron sheds have not yet supplanted the old typical hut. We see, in the bush, on the slope of the sandy dune, a little forest of mimosa, *minḡanye*, *mikawakwa* (*Strychnos*). In its midst nestles a village. Thongas like to build amongst trees, to protect themselves against the terrible south winds which frequently blow across the plain, and perhaps also to shield themselves from the inquisitive eyes of people passing along the road. The little community prefers to live by itself, as it is entirely self-sufficing. This small wood is also used ³⁶¹ ⁵¹⁴ for other purposes. Thongas have not yet learned to build the kind of outhouse which is described in English by two letters (W. C.), and they "go outside" (*humela handle*) into the little copse. The air is not very pure when we cross it, so we hasten to reach the village. The accompanying plan (p. 312) represents a combination of features observed in many Thonga kraals; it is rare to find a "muti" as complete as this.

³⁶¹ We first note the external circular fence (*lihlampfu*). It is ⁷¹² made of branches, thorny or otherwise, one and a half to two feet ⁴¹⁷ high, more or less rotten. It is not built as a protection against ³⁵¹ enemies. In this tribe, villages are not fortified, and, in case of war, the only resource is flight. The fence protects against ³⁶¹ spiritual enemies, witches, as we shall see later on. The path ³⁵¹ leads us straight to the main entrance (16) the *mharana*, which is three or four feet wide. But the fence is open in some other places for narrower passages called *psiruba* (17), one for about every three huts; these smaller openings lead to the wood and are used only by the inhabitants to "*humela handle*." Passers by, as a rule, do not enter by such back gates. They are private. On either side of the large gate is often seen a growing tree and some poles, which clearly show the entrance. This is never closed during the day. On our right, a little court with some broken pots which denote a fire-place, is the *bandla* (21), the place where the men congregate. In front of us, at the other extremity of the circle, is the headman's hut (1) or rather the hut of his principal wife. On the way to it, we cross the *hubo* (22) the central square and pass round the *ranga*. (Ro.), *shibaya*.

727 They have killed... So they are exposed to the mysterious and
 775 deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a
 828 medical treatment. What is the *nuru*? *Nuru* is the spirit of the
 783 slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him
 789 and may drive him into insanity: his eyes swell, protrude and
 761 become inflamed. He will go out of his mind, be attacked by
 giddiness (*ndzululwan*) and the thirst for blood may lead him to
 fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his
 assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is
 required: the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the
nuru of their sanguinary expedition. (*Lurulula* comes from *nuru*,
 plur. *miluru* (1)).

In what does this treatment consist? The slayers must
 remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put
 on old clothes, eat with special spoons because their hands are

764 (1) We met with the notion of *nuru* for the first time à propos of the rite of
 775 huma (p. 400); we shall find it again when dealing with hunting customs (Part IV).
 761 The *nuru* is to be feared not only in the case of slain enemies but in connexion
 with any human corpse. As a proof, I may quote the following curious story
 which Spoon told me and of the truth of which he was fully convinced. A
 traveller died under the great fig-tree of Libombo (near Rikatla). He had climbed on
 to the tree and fallen on his own stick, which he had planted in the ground. He was
 not buried, as no one knew him. So his corpse fell into decomposition on the spot;
 his skull became white. Later on a bush fire burnt all the grass and the skull was
 764 seen for years "saying mpha" (it was shining), the teeth "saying bva" (descriptive
 775 adverb, same meaning). One day the boys of Libombo went to pick wild figs from
 755 the tree and again saw the skull. Spoon was one of them. The fire had just passed
 789 by again. "We beat it with our sticks and amused ourselves by rolling it over like a
 761 ball. We did not know it was a human skull... When we got home we began to be
 seized by the drunkenness of *nuru*, the disease of those who have killed a man. During
 the night we were delirious (*hanta-hanteka*), our eyes swelled and were full of exuda-
 tions (*malanga*), the four of us, Tsukela, Tlabin, Sibakuze and myself. Next morning
 my uncle went to the fig-tree and saw that we had killed a man there! The medicine-
 man who understands the treatment of *nuru*, Dudela, who had been a slayer in war, called
 us to his village. We stood in a line before him; he poured a little of his powder in-
 to the hands of each one of us, took a little in his mouth, rubbed his forehead. Then
 he insulted us saying: "You will die! Who began beating that skull?" Each of us
 denied having given the first blow. Then he said: "Take care! Do not go there
 any more nor near that *akulu* tree where another corpse has been burnt under the
 leaves! Go away."

514 When a man has murdered another in a scuffle, he can replace this *nuru* medicine
 789 by his own urine. He must drink a little of it and rub his forehead with it. The
 giddiness will pass away. If the murder has been committed from a distance, as with
 775 a gun, the *nuru* is not so much to be feared, as the enemy was far away. A little of
 626 the medicine will be sufficient to treat the murderer. Spoon is ignorant of the compo-
 761 sition of the *nuru* drug.